



Passenger Handbook



Van Buren Public Transit
610 David Walton Drive
Bangor, MI 49013

269-427-7921

<https://www.vanburencountymi.gov/551/Public-Transit>



Like us on Facebook at Van Buren Public Transit

CONTACT INFORMATION

General Public Ride Scheduling: 269-427-7921

Veteran's Ride Scheduling: 269-302-0237

Fax: 269-427-5062

Email: Rides@vbco.org

Van Buren Public Transit does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of our activities or operations.

Anyone who believes that he or she has been discriminated against by the transit system should contact the office during the hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at 269-427-7921 and ask to speak to a supervisor, or by mail at 610 David Walton Drive, Bangor, MI 49013.

INTENT OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Van Buren Public Transit is pleased to provide this shared ride service to the residents of Van Buren County, Michigan. Our passengers are the most important part of our transit program and keeping them safe is our number one goal.

This booklet provides a reference pertaining to passenger responsibilities while using our service. These policies serve as a guide in making decisions that affect passenger responsibility and safety.

All policies will be enforced in a consistent, fair manner. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, an appeals process and telephone contact numbers are included in this booklet.

SHARED RIDE SERVICE

To increase efficiency, Van Buren Public Transit provides a shared ride service which means passengers will often ride while other passengers are picked up and dropped off. Personal items must stay in the custody of the passenger; no items should be left unattended on the transit vehicle at any time. Drivers are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

TRANSIT SERVICES AND HOURS OF OPERATION

FLEX LOOP ROUTES

A Flex Route, also known as a deviated route, is like a fixed route as it keeps to a regular hourly schedule, but vehicles can deviate from the route to pick up or drop off passengers from other locations along the way, when prearranged through Dispatch. Once a passenger is picked up from the "FLEXED" location the vehicle will return to its regular route and continue on from the place it left, or deviated from the route. Flexes are arranged time permitting, and may not be available if the route is behind schedule. A vehicle can FLEX up to two blocks away from its route. Flex Loop Routes run in Paw Paw and South Haven.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Paw Paw Concord Loop: Monday through Friday 8:00am to 6:00pm/5:00pm last loop
Saturday and Sunday 10:00am to 4:00pm/3:00pm last loop

South Haven Metro Loop: Monday through Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm/4:00pm last loop
Saturday and Sunday 10:00am to 4:00pm/3:00pm last loop

DIAL-A-RIDE

Curb to curb service within the Paw Paw and South Haven areas.

DIAL-A-RIDE HOURS OF OPERATION

Paw Paw: Monday through Thursday 10:00am to 4:00pm/3:30pm last call
Friday 10:00am to 3:00pm/2:30pm last call

South Haven: Monday through Friday 6:45am to 8:00pm/7:30pm last call
Saturday and Sunday 10:00am to 4:00pm/3:30pm last call

RESERVATIONS - IN COUNTY

Travel within Van Buren County. We recommend at least 24 hour advance notice for reservation rides. Reservations can be made up to 14 days in advance.

RESERVATIONS - OUT OF COUNTY

Travel to surrounding area counties for medical appointments.

ALL RESERVATIONS HOURS OF SERVICE

Monday through Friday: Pick-up 8:45am to 9:45am Return 12:00pm to 12:30pm
Pick-up 12:00pm to 1:00pm Return 4:30pm to 5:00pm

VETERANS SHUTTLE

Veterans travel to the VA medical center in Battle Creek.

VETERANS SHUTTLE HOURS OF SERVICE

Tuesday and Thursday: Drop offs 9:00am & 12:30pm Returns 12:30pm & 4:30pm

FARES

Full Fare is an adult fare. Half Fare is for Seniors (60+), persons with disabilities, children ages 2 to 17 and students. There is no charge for infants under 2 years old with a paid full fare.

Drivers cannot make change or track overpayments. Please have the exact fare, tokens or passes ready when boarding the bus. Buy a Transit Pass "Punch Card" on the bus for convenience and a discount: a \$7.00 value for only \$6.00.

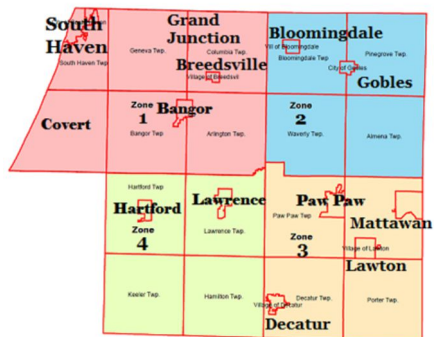
PAW PAW	<u>Full Fare</u>	<u>Half Fare</u>
Concord Loop	\$1.00	\$0.50
Dial-A-Ride	\$2.50	\$1.25

SOUTH HAVEN	<u>Full Fare</u>	<u>Half Fare</u>
Metro Loop	\$1.00	\$0.50
Dial-A-Ride ZONE 1 (see map 1 below)	\$2.50	\$1.25
Dial-A-Ride ZONE 2 (see map 1 below)	\$3.00	\$1.50

RESERVATIONS	<u>Full Fare</u>	<u>Half Fare</u>
Within the Same Zone (see map 2 below)	\$4.00	2.00
Zone to Zone (see map 2 below)	\$6.00	3.00
Out of County	\$20.00	\$10.00
Out of County Excess Wait Time Per 10 Minutes	\$7.50	\$3.75



Map 1



Map 2

SCHEDULING RIDES

All rides are scheduled on a first call, first served basis. Rides are based on availability.

Reservations: Call 24 hours to 14 days before a ride is needed.

Dial-A-Ride: For same day service call as soon as you know you need a ride.

Veterans: Call 269-302-0237 as soon as you know you need a ride.

Paw Paw and South Haven Loop Riders: Call to let us know which hour you need to be picked up if a flex.

All Riders: When scheduling your ride, please provide the dispatcher with your first and last name, the number of passengers going with you, your pick-up location, your destination and appointment time (if applicable).

PICK-UP TIMES

As a shared ride service, Van Buren Public Transit drivers make every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. Due to demand of services and seasonal weather conditions, arrival times may vary.

Reservations: If the bus arrives early, please be waiting and ready to leave so the service can stay on schedule for all of our passengers.

If you have waited more than 15-minutes after your scheduled pick-up time and the bus has not yet arrived, please contact Dispatch at 269-427-7921 to inquire.

Paw Paw and South Haven Loop Riders: Please be waiting at or near the bus stop before the departure time stated on the bus stop signs.

3-Minute Rule: Drivers will wait for 3 minutes after they have arrived at a pick-up location before leaving and listing the passenger as a “no-show”. If you anticipate being late for your scheduled ride, please call Dispatch to see if we may be able to accommodate you at a later time.

We have this 3-minute rule to keep our buses on schedule and to get our riders to their destinations on time.

RETURN TRIPS

Reservations and Veterans: The return ride is scheduled when the initial pick-up ride is scheduled.

Dial-A-Ride: Passengers will be required to call Dispatch to schedule their return ride when they are finished with their trip. We make every effort to pick-up our Dial-A-Ride passengers in a timely manner.

Paw Paw and South Haven Loop Riders: Call to let us know which hour you need to be picked up if a flex.

All passengers are transported to the destination scheduled with Dispatch. Drivers will not make any unscheduled stops.

CANCELLING RIDES

Passengers who need to cancel their ride should call Dispatch before their scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger waits for the bus to arrive before canceling their ride, it will be counted as a no-show. If there are repeated no-shows due to passengers not cancelling rides, the appropriate no-show fees will be charged and the passenger will be required to pay the no-show fees before being allowed to ride the bus.

TRANSIT RIDER CARD PROGRAM

Veterans and Seniors (aged 60+) ride free of charge on any Van Buren Public Transit vehicle.

People with disabilities qualify for the Universal Reduced Fare Card program offered by the State of Michigan (see below).

- Participant must be a Van Buren County resident.
- Participant must be a Veteran or Senior (aged 60+) at the time of application.
- The card is non-transferable (other people may NOT use your card).
- Participant must present the card to the driver when boarding the vehicle.
- This card is valid for any Loop or scheduled ride normally provided by Van Buren Public Transit, including out of county medical/legal rides.
- This card is NOT valid for contract or special service rides.
- If you have a scheduled ride and are a "NO-SHOW" you will be charged the regular senior fare and not permitted to ride until the fare has been paid.
- Students and people with disabilities who are not Veterans or have not reached the age of 60 are not eligible for free rides with the Transit Rider Card.
- There is no expiration date on the card
- Van Buren Public Transit reserves the right to cancel this program at any time.

The Universal Reduced Fare Card program offered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) allows for Seniors (aged 60+) and Persons with Disabilities to ride on any participating county transit system at their reduced fare without applying to that county for the reduced fare. Van Buren Public Transit has incorporated this program into the Transit Rider Card program.



This logo indicates participation in the Universal Reduced Fare Card program.



This logo indicates the individual qualifies for the Universal Reduced Fare Card program. It **DOES NOT** indicate free ride eligibility.

HOW TO APPLY

1. When scheduling a ride, ask Dispatch to mail you an application.
2. When on a Van Buren Public Transit vehicle, ask the Driver for an application.

LIFT CAPABILITY AND SERVICE

Transit vehicles are equipped with lifts and are for use by anyone. The bus and all equipment are to be operated by trained staff only. For safety reasons, passengers or escorts are NOT ALLOWED to assist with operating lift procedures, or any other operating functions of the transit vehicles.

ESCORTS/GUESTS

An escort is a person who is directly involved in assisting the passenger and may ride free of charge. Any person other than an escort who is riding with the passenger is considered a guest and will be required to pay the regular fare. Escorts are mandatory for anyone requiring assistance with mobility, medication, meals, or other personal or medical needs. This includes, but is not limited to, nursing home and assisted living residents.

The escort must be picked up and returned to the same location as the passenger.

TRANSPORTATION FOR AGES 0 - 17

Children ages 8 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

Unattended children will be required to wear a seatbelt.

Van Buren Public Transit does not provide car seats or infant carriers. It is your responsibility to provide a car seat or infant carrier for your child, as well as ensure the seat is properly placed in the bus seat.

Strollers will need to be folded and properly stowed to not block the aisle.

It is your responsibility to contact us regarding changes in your child's schedule. For safety reasons, we cannot accept verbal transportation changes from your child or daycare. The only exception would be if your child or daycare provided a letter signed by you requesting the change.

Have children ready to go for their pick-ups to ensure all passengers make it to their destinations in a timely fashion.

Children are required to follow the rules of the bus just the same as all other passengers. Drivers have a great responsibility and behavioral issues jeopardize everyone's safety.

Routes are determined based on the quickest route for all passengers—there are no guarantees on pick-up or drop-off times.

VEHICLE BACKING & DRIVEWAY POLICY

For safety reasons, Transit drivers have been instructed to avoid backing the transit vehicles. Drivers will not pull into residential driveways or put themselves in a position which requires backing the transit vehicle.

ON BOARD SAFETY POLICY

Protecting the safety and security of our passengers is and always will be a top priority for Van Buren Public Transit.

For passenger safety, all passengers are strongly encouraged to wear a seatbelt, and must remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion. Passengers must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before leaving their seat. Passengers must be prepared for the bus to make sudden stops.

Passengers must stay clear of the doorways and stairwell and never put arms, hands, or head outside windows. Please keep feet off the seats and out of the aisle.

Please dispose of your garbage before exiting the bus. We appreciate your help in keeping our vehicles clean.

Service animals are allowed on board, but must remain controlled at all times, and not bother other passengers.

Pets are allowed on board if they are in an appropriate and secure carrier.

ITEMS ON THE BUS

Walkers and oxygen tanks must be secured properly before the driver is allowed to move the vehicle. If needed, ask the driver for assistance.

There is a two shopping bag limit per passenger on the bus. Transit provides two bags to new riders; additional bags may be purchased. Grocery carts are allowed and must be secured. Any package or baggage that is permitted in the bus must be placed where it will not interfere with the operation of the vehicle or with any other passengers.

We do not transport furniture or larger items. All articles brought on board the vehicle must be stowed properly and not obstruct the aisles before the bus is in motion.

Van Buren Public Transit is NOT responsible for lost or stolen items!

PROHIBITED ITEMS/BEHAVIORS

For the comfort and safety of everyone, eating, drinking, smoking, vaping, spitting, horseplay, vulgar language, bullying, threatening or intimidating behavior, destruction of property, illegal substances, lewd or indecent behavior, and potentially dangerous items are prohibited on all Van Buren Public Transit vehicles.

Causing a disturbance or harassing other passengers or the bus operator is strictly prohibited. Fighting, throwing things, pushing, hitting others, shouting, and rough behavior are all prohibited.

We do not transport flammable items such as gasoline, gasoline containers, auto batteries, fireworks, or any other flammable material.

Vandalism or graffiti to seats and other portions of the bus is prohibited, and could be subject to a fine and/or prosecution.

Van Buren Public Transit reserves the right to refuse service when necessary.

WEATHER

Weather related access to private homes: For your safety and the safety of transit staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible. Drivers will not shovel snow for passengers to get to the bus.

Weather related service cancellations or suspensions: Van Buren Public Transit will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exist making travel unsafe, Van Buren Public Transit reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable. If service is temporarily suspended, all rides, regardless of the trip purpose will be cancelled.

WWMT TV and our Facebook page will announce closings.

Winter riding tips:

- Stay aware of weather conditions which may affect services.
- Allow additional travel time in inclement weather.
- Avoid delays by having the correct fare and being on time.
- Prior to entering the bus, clean footwear of snow and slush so it doesn't gather on the steps or on the floor of the bus causing a safety hazard.
- Assess your need to travel and call to reschedule as needed.
- Watch your step at all times, wear your seatbelt, and wear appropriate winter clothing.

Severe Weather Guidelines: Severe weather may affect transit services. The buses will run slower to be safe in adverse weather. The following service changes may occur at any time hazardous road conditions exist.

- Time pick-up intervals may increase
- Non-essential trips may not be provided
- Bus service on less traveled streets, especially those not plowed, may not be provided
- In cases of severe weather changes, passengers on buses will be taken home immediately

Proper and adequate clothing: Passengers and care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are dressed properly for their ride. Drivers will not assist passengers with their clothing. Winter attire should include proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Van Buren Public Transit is closed on the following holidays:

New Years Eve	Labor Day
New Years Day	Thanksgiving Day
Easter Sunday	Thanksgiving Friday
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day

Van Buren Public Transit closes for one additional day per year to conduct mandatory Annual Refresher Training for all staff.

MONITORING & SURVEILLANCE

For the safety and security of our passengers, activities on and around Van Buren Public Transit vehicles and facilities may be visually and audibly recorded.

Cameras protect passengers and employees from dangers by serving as deterrents, assisting in monitoring and training for employees regarding emergency situations, incidents/accidents, various training component to include customer service, and aiding in investigations as necessary.

VBPT DRIVERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO:

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Make change
- Enter a passenger's residence for any reason
- Enter any apartment building to look for passengers. If you live in an apartment building, please wait and watch for your bus in the lobby or outside your building
- Enter a business, medical facility, or public building beyond the lobby
- Perform any personal care for riders, including but not limited to, assisting riders with getting dressed
- Lift or carry riders
- Assist riders or mobility devices up or down steps of residences and other buildings
- Fuel the vehicle with passengers on board
- Shovel snow for passengers to get to the bus
- Accept tips or gratuities
- Drop off a rider at an alternate location at the request of the rider, parent, guardian, or agency representative. The rider, parent, guardian, or agency representative must contact Van Buren Public Transit to make such changes.
- Drive or back into private driveways

Van Buren Public Transit staff are expected to treat all passengers and the general public with courtesy and respect.

REFUSAL OF SERVICE

Van Buren Public Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any person:

- Who is intoxicated or belligerent toward drivers or other passengers;
- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others;
- Has unreasonable personal hygiene, open wounds, or highly contagious diseases;
- Who allows a pet or service animal to run loose on the bus, threaten or intimidate other passengers.

APPEALS PROCESS

If you think that you have been discriminated against by Van Buren Public Transit, a written appeals process can be initiated by writing to:

Van Buren Public Transit
Attn: Director of Public Transit
610 David Walton Drive
Bangor, MI 49013

Appeals may also be presented in person at the above address. Please call the office in advance if special accommodations or requirements will be needed. Questions concerning the appeals process can be answered by the Director of Public Transit. Van Buren Public Transit is committed to providing non-discriminatory service.

General Complaints

General complaints will be thoroughly investigated and addressed by calling the Van Buren Public Transit Operations Supervisor or Chief Operations Officer. Complaints may be submitted by calling 269-427-7921, in writing at the address above or in person.

TITLE VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Federal Transit Administration works to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation in support of our mission to enhance the social and economic quality of life for all Americans. The FTA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for monitoring FTA recipients' Title VI programs and ensuring their compliance with Title VI requirements.

Van Buren Public Transit is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.B.

For additional information about our Title VI Program, please visit our website at:

<http://www.vbco.org/pages0540467.asp>

ADA COMPLIANCE

Title II and III of the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) provides that no entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation services. The law sets forth specific requirements for vehicle and facility accessibility and the provision of service, including access to fixed route bus and complementary paratransit service.

Van Buren Public Transit is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation to all people without discrimination based on disabilities, as outlined by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325).

